

Department of Correction Brief Regarding Public Act 11-51
November 4, 2011

Effective July 1, 2011, the Department of Correction (DOC) has the authority to release individuals, from DOC facilities to home confinement, convicted under provisions related to drug possession, Driving Under the Influence, and Driving a Motor Vehicle with a Suspended License.

The essence of the law is that the DOC will assess individuals to make a determination about granting a discretionary release to home confinement. This means that the individual released under these provisions will be mandated to remain at home during the period of their sentence unless he or she has received explicit permission to leave their home. Appropriate reasons would be, for example, to attend treatment sessions, to go to work, and to report to their local parole office.

An Advisory Committee has been established as directed by statute. The current list of members is below. A tremendous amount of work has been done in the area of assessment, programming, staffing, and supervision. **The DOC expects to get the program up and running by January 1, 2012.**

Evaluation of this new release mechanism will be done in several ways. The most important of these is to determine if we can maintain, if not reduce, rates of recidivism for those who will be given a discretionary release, in comparison to the rate of recidivism for those who had completed their sentences for the same offenses in the past when a discretionary release was not available.

We will also evaluate the amount of social collateral damage that incarceration causes. We will estimate the negative effect on offenders and their families who had been given mandatory minimum sentences. It is our hope that we will be able to reduce such collateral damage (family disruption, financial loss, and loss of employment) without increasing rates of recidivism.

One of the most important things for the public to understand is that the new authority granted to the Department of Correction has created the opportunity to enhance the quality of programming for these offenders and thus make everyone safer.